

San Jacinto River Waste Pits, Texas

Site Update – June 2010

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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BACKGROUND:

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits (SJRWP) site is located on the western bank of the San Jacinto River near Houston, immediately north of the Interstate Highway 10 bridge. The site occupies a 20.6 acre tract of land currently owned by Virgil C. McGinnis Trustee and is bounded on the south by Interstate Highway 10, on the east by the San Jacinto River main channel, and on the north and west by shallow water off the River's main channel.

The primary hazardous substances documented at the SJRWP site are dioxins (polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans). Samples collected in the disposal pits and in the San Jacinto River have dioxin concentrations as high as 41,300 parts per trillion dioxin-Toxic Equivalents.

A fish consumption advisory based on dioxin is in place on this segment of the watershed. The SJRWP site was

listed on the EPA National Priorities List on March 19, 2008. More information about the site is available at <http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/pdf/files/0606611.pdf>.

STATUS OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

I. Source Stabilization

In the Administrative Order on Consent issued to the responsible parties (RPs) for the time critical removal action, the RPs were requested to submit a Technical Memorandum evaluating all removal option alternatives and satisfying EPA requirements. The Technical Memorandum was submitted to EPA on June 2, 2010. EPA is reviewing the memo and will make comments by the end of the month.

Additional sampling the RPs conducted at the site at EPA's request confirmed that concentrations of dioxin/furans were above the site specific screening levels (330 ng/kg) within the original 1966 berm location.

II. Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

From May 2010 to early June 2010, field sampling associated with the sediment sampling & analysis plan was initiated and completed. This sampling plan was approved by EPA in partnership with TCEQ and the Natural Resource Trustees. In addition, security fencing and informational signs have been installed around the waste pits and on the eastern and western bank of the I-10 bridge/San Jacinto River junction

On June 23, 2010, EPA will meet with Harris County officials to give an update on site progress. Afterwards, EPA will also give a public update at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, in partnership with the TCEQ TMDL watershed update.

III. Watershed Management

EPA, the Galveston Corps of Engineers and TCEQ worked collaboratively to establish a sampling process to limit dredging activities in the area around the site. Sampling results will inform the decision-making process on applications for new or existing Clean Water Act Section 404 permits (i.e., discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters of the U.S.). TCEQ is currently reviewing sample data from applicants.

IV. Enforcement

The PRP group is conducting the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study under the Unilateral Administrative Order. The EPA entered into an Administrative Order on Consent with the PRP Group on May 11, 2010, to stabilize the waste pits. The PRP Group is currently conducting the site stabilization time critical removal action under EPA oversight.